



Office of Council Member Kathie Tovo

301 W. Second St, Austin, TX 78701 | (512) 978-2109 | austintexas.gov/district9

Resilient Communities/Resilient Schools

A proposal for Community Schools Coordinators in 4 High-Needs Austin Neighborhoods from Austin Voices for Education and Youth

“Austin Voices for Education and Youth is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has worked for more than a decade to help create community schools and to operate Family Resource Centers at AISD campuses. We have a long and productive partnership with the City of Austin, which helps fund our Family Resource Centers (thank you!). Many members of the City Council are familiar with our work and have been strong supporters.

Since the closing of AISD’s campuses in March 2020 due to COVID-19, Austin Voices has worked closely with AISD, city, county and community partners to make sure that our families and students are cared for during this difficult season. In normal times, we serve over 4,000 families annually with wraparound supports, including housing, utilities, access to healthcare, employment, counseling, adult education and more, all in the interest of increasing family -and therefore student- stability. This work has led to significant and lasting drops in student mobility, resulting in increased enrollment, better attendance, and increased graduation rates at the schools where we operate.

Through much of the pandemic, our staff of social workers and Family Resource Center staff have continued to work with families by phone, virtually, and at over 70 large food distributions and community events. During the winter emergency, we quickly expanded our capacity to provide food, water and other supplies directly to families. We were already working with many of the most vulnerable families at our schools and had strong systems in place to identify family needs and to make sure families did not fall through the cracks. We were organized to be resilient and we were ready when a community-wide crisis hit, in part because we’d been dealing with crises one family at a time for over a decade and had the systems and relationship in place to move quickly to meet needs.

Attached to this proposal is a comprehensive list of the many ways we’ve been supporting Austin families during the pandemic and how we have partnered directly with the City, Austin Energy, HACA, Central Texas Food Bank, Travis County, AISD, Central Health and a host of other partners to meet needs for housing, rent, utility assistance, food, water, healthcare, vaccinations, books, coats, diapers, computers, adult education, census completion and ongoing case management.

Recently, we have begun to reopen our Family Resource Centers in-person and have worked with campuses on enrollment, vaccine events and other crucial re-engagement efforts, while continuing to offer food and other pandemic-related supports. We have a full summer of reengagement events happening with campuses, including apartment complex block parties



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(several in partnership with HACA), large food distributions and back-to-school events. We have also launched a Summer Health Campaign with partners, focused on getting kids ready to go back to school with sports physicals, immunizations and COVID vaccinations in place.

We are grateful to enlightened city leaders who in the past have invested in programs and services for children and their families, including Family Resource Centers, after-school programs and children's healthcare. We are excited to work with you to build upon the successful work we have done together thus far and to extend the reach of our Family Resource Centers to serve as ongoing resilience hub for more families throughout Austin.

Proposal: Austin Voices for Education and Youth is requesting support for a one-year pilot project called "Resilient Communities/Resilient Schools." Based on over a decade of successful community school development and experience in many of Austin's neediest neighborhoods, Austin Voices will place a dedicated *Community School Coordinator* in four targeted communities (North Central, North East, Central East, Dove Springs). These coordinators will link community partners, local campuses, parents and grassroots organizations together with our network of eight Family Resource Centers to expand awareness of and access to resources, as well as provide regular opportunities for parents and community members to work and plan together on campus/community improvements. The proposal will allow us to expand our reach to new schools in these four targeted neighborhoods. It seeks to expand our network of Community Schools by connecting more campuses with our existing network of Community Schools and 8 Family Resource Centers. We are working to ensure that all school families have a link to a resilience hub, using our schools not only for physical safety but for ongoing access to wellness support for students and their families. By tying more schools and families into this network of supports, we seek to build permanent support systems for families experiencing crisis."

Budget:

4 Community Schools Coordinators @\$60K each (total cost) = \$240K

Organizing budget for events, training/planning meetings, printing, mileage, etc. = \$20K

Total Cost: \$260K